

## Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04

CEA-01 L-03 H-02 PA-01 PRS-01 AGR-05 AGRE-00 /089 W

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R 140600Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3285

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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HONG KONG FOR TREASURY REP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON PINR, TH

SUBJECT: RTG REACTS NEGATIVELY TO AMERICAN CHAMBER PRESIDENT'S  
REMARKS

REF: BANGKOK 25158

1. IN A CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON SEPTEMBER 13, DR. PHAIT  
PAKKASEM, ECONOMIC ADVISOR TO THE PRIME MINISTER, EXPRESSED  
GREAT ANNOYANCE WITH LOCAL AMERICAN CHAMBER PRESIDENT JAMES  
ROONEY FOR ARTICLE QUOTING ROONEY CRITICAL OF THE SENI GOVERN-  
MENT PUBLISHED IN A THAI NEWSPAPER, AND CARRIED ON AP AND  
REUTER'S. HE EMPHASIED THAT THE DISPLEASURE WAS NOT JUST HIS,  
BUT REFLECTED THE RTG'S. JUST THAT MORNING HE CLAIMED THAT  
PRIME MINISTER SENI BROUGHT UP THE ARTICLE AT A MEETING CALLED  
TO REVIEW THE GOVERNMENT'S FIVE-YEAR PLAN.

2. AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL, THE SEPTEMBER 5 ISSUE OF THE "NATION"  
GAVE PROMINENT DISPLAY TO A CRITICISM OF THE SENI GOVERNMENT'S  
PERFORMANCE AND POLICIES BY ROONEY. THE "NATION" ARTICLE WAS  
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BASED ON ONE BY ROONEY CARRIED IN THE AMCHAM PUBLICATION

"THAI-AMERICAN BUSINESS" (TAS).

3. PHISIT SAID THAT IF ROONEY WAS ATTEMPTING TO JOLT THE GOVERNMENT INTO MOVES FAVORABLE TO AMERICAN BUSINESS, HE WAS QUITE WRONG. THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE SWAYED BY SUCH ATTACKS. HE CONTENDED THAT THE ARTICLE WAS BASED NOT ONLY ON TAB BUT ALSO ON AN INTERVIEW WHICH ROONEY GAVE TO THE "NATION". SENI WAS, HE CLAIMED, UPSET BY THE ARTICLE WHICH IGNORED THE GOVERNMENT'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND UNDERCUT ITS EFFORTS TO DO THE KIND OF THINGS WHICH ROONEY CLAIMED HE WANTED DONE. PHISIT SEEMED ESPECIALLY ANNOYED THAT ROONEY IN PAST MEETINGS WITH HIM HAD BEEN CONSTRUCTIVE AND COOPERATIVE AND THEN WENT AND STABBED HIM IN THE BACK.

4. COMMENT: THE GOVERNMENT'S REACTION IS ABOUT WHAT WE ANTICIPATED IN REFTEL. PHISIT WAS USING THE THAI "INDIRECT APPROACH" TO MAKE SURE THAT ROONEY KNEW HOW HE FELT WITHOUT DIRECTLY CONFRONTING HIM. EMBOFF CONVEYED SUBSTANCE OF CONVERSATION TO ROONEY, WHO REGRETS THE WAY THE "NATION" PLAYED THE ARTICLE AND SPECIFICALLY DENIED THAT HE HAD DIRECTLY TALKED TO THE "NATION" BEFORE THE ARTICLE APPEARED. HE HOPES TO NOLLIFY PHISIT AT THE MEETING OF THE FOREIGN INVESTMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SEPTEMBER 16. ROONEY IS A GOOD POLITICIAN, BUT PHISIT IS THE TYPE WHO HOLDS A GRUDGE AND WE WOULD EXPECT THAT GOVERNMENT RELATIONS WITH AMCHANW WILL REMAIN STRAINED DURING THE REST OF ROONEY'S TENURE AS PRESIDENT.  
BURKE

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